CHAPTER - 2

ADOPTION OF HERBAL MEDICINE WORLDWIDE
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The pressure of modern living has become more intense as it becomes increasingly difficult to reconcile the conflicting demands of social and working life. Consumers have to manage pressurized and increasingly hectic working lives, while at the same time have to balance social and family life. Consumer needs for re-energizing and relaxing their bodies and minds is driving of the growth the whole range of alternative therapies such as Ayurveda, Unani, Homeopathy and Acupuncture etc.

This also represents a reaction against modern medicine and a desire to seek out more holistic, natural alternatives that are perceived to be healthier.

Herbs have always been the principal forms of medicine in India and presently they are becoming so throughout the developed world, as people strive to stay healthy on the face of chronic stress and pollution and to treat illness with medicines that work in concert with the body's own defense. People in Europe, North America and Australia are consulting trained herbal professionals and are using the plants-based medicine.

Global Acceptability of Herbal Medicines

As we know that herbal medicine is the most popular form of traditional (Alternative/ complementary) medicine. A high level of interest and acceptance of alternative medicine among general practitioners has been reported in recent years. [1]

According to the Hindustan Times "Centuries old Ayurvedic System of medicine can be of remarkable success in treatment of many diseases like spondylitis, arthritis, depression, migraine, skin disease and paralysis etc, if followed under proper guidance. [2]

Due to an increase in the cost of allopathic medicine treatment, the incidence of self-medication has increased and many families prefer to try some
remedies and alternative therapies before consulting a qualified medical practitioner. [3]

According to a report, alternative medicine is no longer thought to be harmless. Many studies give a warning about the possible dangers of using alternative medicine. It has been reported that the use of ginseng, a traditional Chinese herb, has caused intoxication requiring clinical alternation. [4]

In Africa, upto 80% and in India 65% of the population depends on traditional medicine to help meet their health care needs. Elsewhere in Asia and in Latin America, historical circumstances and cultural beliefs mean that population continues to use traditional medicine. In many developed countries certain complementary and alternative medicine therapies are popular. The percentage of population that has used complementary / alternative medicine at least once is 49% in France, 42%, in USA and 31% in Belgium. [5]

In Ethiopia 90%, in Benin 70%, in India 70%, in Rwanda 70%, in Tanzania 60% and in Uganda 60% of population is using traditional medicine for their primary health care solution. [5]

According to the World Health Organization report, traditional (complementary / alternative) medicine is used for the full spectrum of disease from self-limited to life threatening illness. For example a WHO Rollback Malaria programme reported that in Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Zambia, the first line of treatment for more than 60% of children with high fever is the use of herbal medicine at home. A survey shows that over three-quarters of AIDS patients in Africa, North America and Europe use traditional or complementary medicine for various symptoms of conditions. [6]

Worldwide TM/CAM is used to treat chronic pain and to improve the quality of life of those suffering from incurable disease; in the modern society traditional medicine is increasingly used worldwide. One of the main reasons is effectiveness. For example, a survey report of consumer & patients who have used traditional medicine treatment in different countries showed that in Belgium 77% consumers and patients feel satisfied and in Denmark, 77%
consider themselves be cured by traditional / alternative medicine, only 17% have no effect and 10% worsened. In Vietnam, 100% effectiveness was reported but slower than western medicine. [7]

In USA, 66% women have confidence in the safety of herbal medicine and 37% women assume effectiveness of herbal medicine, even 57% doctors believe herbal medicine have good benefits. [8]

Some scientific research data also showed efficacy of the herbal medicine. For instance, a summarized randomized clinical trail showed benefit of 34% trails could compare to the placebo control group. Although 48% report the benefit were unlikely due to design or analytic flaws. [9]

**Global Market of Herbal Medicine**

The market potential is very high if the growing acceptance of the herbal medicinal philosophy continues, with its emphasis on holistic, longer term and generally softer treatment and due to the fear of the pharmaceutical industries declining levels of innovation and growing concern over the side effects of medicine. The increase in the incidence of immune system related diseases such as AIDS and myalgic encephalopathy is another plus, as is the aging population with the greater preponderance of chronic illness, which comes with age.

Asian consumers show an inclination towards these natural products with its huge population and growing income. Asia is fast becoming the most favourable destination for the multinational companies. [10]

Two clear trends appeared in these markets diversification and the increasing use of natural herbal ingredients. The use of herbal ingredients is part of a wider plan caused by Asian consumers’ trend that has developed out of the use of Traditional Asian Medicines.

These traditional medicines have always placed great emphasis on prevention, which means taking regular preventive products. This has created
a climate whereby consumers are accustomed to taking daily medication and actively seek out products with health preserving properties.

David McAlpine, Director of MTW'S Herbal Medicine Division said that the largest national market for herbal medicine was Western Germany with estimated annual sales of $2.2 billion and per capita consumption of $36.55 followed by the USA with sales of $895 million but per capita consumption of only $3.60. Denmark well down the list of annual sales at only $30.2 million has annual per capita consumption of $26.66. Three companies have sales a high as $100 million a year (Schavabe of Germany Bioforce of Switzerland and Dabur of India). [11]

In recent years many foreign enterprises, especially those in Europe and the United States have invested in the research and development in view of the higher growth in chemical based medicines market. With higher advantages in extraction and processing technology, packaging and marketing of these enterprises have not only secured an absolute share on the International market, they are also targeting their marketing campaign, at the Chinese market the origin of traditional herbal medicine. [12]


According to a survey report high increase in sales of the most popular products was witnessed in the USA. The sales of total herbal supplements (Echinacea, garlic, ginkgobiloba, Ginseng, St. Johns wort, & other herbs) was at US $292 million in 1997 and US $587 million in 1998. Percentage
increase of this sale was 10%. It shows rapid sales increase in herbal products. According to the report of the World Health Organization (WHO) the International market of herbal products is estimated to be US $ 60 billion, which is poised to grow to $5 trillion by the year 2050. [14]
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